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## Pinworms

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**Description:** Pinworms are small white worms about 1/2 inch long and as thin as a thread. These worms live in the large intestine. The adult female crawls out of the rectal opening at night and lays her eggs on the skin around it. The eggs cause the child to itch and scratch.

**Symptoms:** Itching around the rectum (worse at night), disturbed sleep and irritability.

**How it is Spread:** Pinworms are spread when a person who has them scratches around the anal area and gets the eggs on his hands. The eggs are then taken into someone else's mouth. The person with pinworms can re-infect himself also. Pinworms can also be spread by clothing or bedding contaminated with eggs of the parasite.

**Incubation Period:** 2-6 weeks.

**How Long Can a Person Pass the Infection To Others?** The infection can be spread to others as long as the worms are present.

**Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers:**

- If you have difficulty controlling the spread (i.e., cases continue to occur), call the local health department for assistance.
- Notify all parents of illness and possible symptoms.

**Control of Spread:**

- Allow the child to return to the child care environment after treatment. The child should receive medical attention.
- Make sure children wash their hands after toilet use. If the child is too young to do so, wash his hands for him.
- Wash bedding/clothing in hot water.
- Do not allow sharing of bed clothing.

**Treatment:** A single dose medication is given to treat pinworms, which is repeated two weeks later.